

activities devoted expressly to them. Mayor Spina is also a valued member of the World Wildlife Fund, Common Cause, the West Orange Animal Welfare League, and GASP.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, the citizens of West Orange, and Sam's friends and family as we recognize Mayor Samuel Spina's valuable contribution to the community.

TIME TO PAY OUR U.N. DUES

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 10, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, it is time to pay the arrears that we owe to the United Nations.

I include for printing in the RECORD a letter from the Honorable John Whitehead, Deputy Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration, and Chair of the United Nations Association. Mr. Whitehead eloquently outlines the reasons we should pay our arrears, and the costs to United States interests if we do not. He further refutes effectively the argument some have made that we do not actually owe this money to the United Nations.

I urge my colleagues to read this letter, and call on the Congress to take action to pay what we owe.

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

June 1, 1998.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: The United Nations Association of the USA, representing millions of Americans through its nationwide chapters and affiliated organizations, regrets the continuing impasse over payment of US arrears to the United Nations. We urge you to consider the following points during the weeks ahead as Congress grapples with the problem of meeting long-standing financial obligations to the United Nations.

The United States, first of all, faces the loss of its vote in the UN General Assembly at the end of this year under Article 19 of the UN Charter. This penalty is automatically applied if a member state's arrears at the year exceed the previous two years' assessments. With the world's largest economy by far, the US historically has been the largest contributor to the UN system. But, the US is now responsible for some 60 percent of the debt of all member states—arrearsages more than double the UN's annual regular budget, which are crippling UN capabilities and paralyzing peacekeeping. Although various contingencies could avoid America's loss of vote at the start of 1999, the mere possibility that the world's leader may be placed in such a position does not benefit our great nation.

On another issue of evident priority to American policymakers, the US now has a limited window of opportunity to negotiate a lowering of its United Nations assessment—from its present rate of 25 percent of the UN's regular budget to 22 percent. UN member states have indicated a willingness to reopen negotiations on the assessment level if a substantial amount of US arrears are paid. One might note that the Reagan Administration—in which I served as Deputy Secretary of State—had opposed such a reduction, fearing diminished influence would follow; other countries oppose it on grounds of equity: A member state's assessment is based primarily on "capacity to pay," largely measured by each member's share of world in-

come—over 26 percent for the United States. The US already pays less than this amount. In contrast, for example the 15 member states of the European Union which account for 30.8 percent of world income, are assessed 36.2 percent of UN costs. The assessment on the Japanese, even with their ailing economy, will rise to just above 20 percent in the year 2000.

Those calling for a lowering of the US rate of assessment argue that this country makes appreciable contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security in other ways, particularly through its defense commitments and refugee and other emergency relief programs. They argue that the United Nations does not reimburse the US for these contributions. When the United States Government decides to launch such operations on its own, under its own control—even if blessed by authorizing United Nations Security Council resolutions—other countries have no say in the mission (and indeed, may see it as susceptible to manipulation for US advantage). We would rightly object to paying through the UN for Russian troops under Russian command in Georgia, or for Nigerian troops under Nigerian command in Sierra Leone—so we cannot claim that the rest of the world owes us money for US operations. The Italians, who led a mission in Albania with very close Security Council oversight, acknowledge they have no claim to reimbursement from other UN members for the costs of that operation. With UN control goes UN financial responsibility—and with national control goes national financial responsibility. If a country asserts exclusive control over its deployments, it volunteers to pay the costs on its own.

Most of the United States' debt to the United Nations actually is owed to past peacekeeping activities, particularly in the former Yugoslavia, which the US voted to create. This means that many countries are owed significant sums for their previous contributions of troops and equipment to peacekeeping operations, and countries are increasingly reluctant to offer troops to the UN when there is no reimbursement. There is no doubt that UN peacekeeping is a cost-effective investment in stability—but if UN peacekeeping is to survive, the United States must pay its share of those expenses.

For all the furious debate over US financial contributions to the agencies and activities of the UN system, the US annually spends only about 0.1 percent of our federal budget—or \$7 per American—on all voluntary as well as assessed contributions. These limited amounts provide support to combat malnutrition, contain the spread of infectious diseases, minimize the devastating impact of refugee flows, harmonize actions on global environmental initiative, provide economic assistance to developing countries and provide for a neutral intervenor to keep the peace in potentially volatile political situations.

The American people do not want the United States to accept the costs of single-handedly being the world's policeman or to address on its own a host of worldwide social, economic and environmental challenges. It serves the national interest to promote consensus-building and burdensharing at the international level and to strengthen the notion of the rule of law on which international stability rests. Opinion research consistently finds that an overwhelming majority of Americans believe in strengthening the United Nations to meet the challenges before us. In a world characterized by a growing web of global connections, the United Nations and its system of agencies and programs offer unique and essential avenues for the United States to exercise leader-

ship in support of its values and its vision for the future.

Sincerely,

JOHN C. WHITEHEAD,
Chairman.

TRIBUTE TO GISSELLE RUIZ

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 10, 1998

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute Ms. Gisselle Ruiz of Lynn, Massachusetts who has received an award from the Lynn Hispanic Scholarship Fund, Inc. for academic excellence.

I hope Gisselle appreciates and is proud of her accomplishments. She is most deserving of the many awards which have been bestowed upon her. Her leadership potential and her willingness to give back to her community are evident by the extracurricular activities she has chosen. She is a role model for her peers and an inspiration to her family, being the first to graduate from high school and go on to college. I trust that she understands the value of continuing her education and hope that she will continue her hard work. Her dedication and commitment are to be commended. I have no doubt that she will be successful in her future endeavors.

Indeed, Ms. Ruiz has worked hard to achieve her goals. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here to recognize the accomplishments of Gisselle Ruiz and I hope my colleagues will join me today in wishing Ms. Ruiz the very best as she continues her education.

THE U.S. ARMY SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS: LEADING THE FIGHT TO KEEP DRUGS FROM REACHING U.S. BORDERS, WHILE PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 10, 1998

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, as many of my colleagues are aware, there has been a concerted effort on many fronts to close the U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA). The opponents of the school have often used distorted or false information that only serves one purpose—to mislead the American public. Opponents of the U.S. Army School of the Americas are correct to point out that several of the school's graduates have been implicated in crimes, corruption, and human rights violations. Press reports have accurately noted that former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega was a former student, as was one of the Salvadoran officers responsible for the 1989 assassination of six Jesuit priests. However, my colleagues should be aware that more than 60,000 young Latin American officers have graduated from the SOA since its creation in 1946, the vast majority of whom have served their nations honorably and responsibly. Graduates of the SOA are personally responsible for the return of democracy in Latin American

nations such as Bolivia and Argentina. Also, many of the school's graduates have lost their lives while combating the Narco-guerrillas and drug lords in Colombia and Peru.

These counterdrug operations are of vital interest to the safety and security of our Nation as the efforts of these brave Latin American soldiers are aimed at reducing the flow of drugs into the United States of America. This Member feels it would be a disservice to brand all the school's graduates as criminals because of the misdeeds of a very few.

The School of the Americas was established to heighten the professionalism of military establishments throughout Latin America. While the early focus of the institution during the Cold War was on combating Soviet-backed insurgencies, in recent years the school's emphasis has primarily shifted towards counterdrug operations to combat drug trafficking. The SOA curriculum also provides training in medical assistance, humanitarian and civil assistance, demining operations, peacekeeping operations, and most importantly human rights training.

One very positive result of the recent exposure of the school has been a much greater emphasis on human rights. They now expose every student at the school to a rigorous formal and informal training program on basic human rights. Specific classes and case studies are used to enhance the training and to make U.S. concerns unambiguously clear. The roles and rights of civilians, clergy, human rights observers, and U.N. personnel are integrated into the training program.

While the SOA has subsequently increased its emphasis on human rights, this Member believes that there is a basic value in encouraging young Latin-American military officers to study and train in the United States. An institution such as the SOA, which annually hosts 1,300 students from almost 20 countries, provides a level of professional training that is not otherwise available. Moreover, exposure to the U.S. lifestyle, values, and ideals offers important lessons for the future military leaders of Latin America.

There have been many false allegations in the past regarding the School of the Americas, such as the alleged existence of SOA torture manuals. This Member can assure my colleagues that there are no such manuals. This Member has contacted the Department of the Army, and the Department confirmed that such manuals do not exist. The SOA does not in any way engage in or endorse such heinous activities. Regarding the allegations that the SOA trains death squads and assassins, this Member can assure my colleagues that this is not true. The SOA is run by Officers of the United States Army that must operate the school in accordance with the governing regulations of the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, and U.S. Public Law. Therefore, this Member can readily assure my colleagues that the SOA is not operating a training camp for death squads and assassins. The curriculum of the SOA is based on U.S. Military doctrine and practices, and uses the same materials from courses presented to U.S. military personnel. It is really outrageous that some people would tell such lies and sad that any Americans would believe such lies.

In April, a member of my staff traveled to Ft. Benning, Georgia, with a staff delegation from the House Committee on National Security on a fact finding tour of the SOA. The staff dele-

gation received a briefing on the entire curriculum currently being taught at the school. My staff member, with the aid of a translator, was able to engage in dialogue with a group of Latin American enlisted soldiers and asked questions about the type of training they were receiving from the SOA. The soldiers were from various countries such as El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Columbia, Venezuela, and Mexico. My staff member noted that all of the soldiers were proud to have been chosen to represent their respective countries at the SOA. Many of these soldiers will return to their home and train other soldiers that could not attend the SOA in the proper application of U.S. military doctrine, human rights, and democracy. In addition, my staff member observed no improprieties in the training being given to students during the staff delegation visit. In fact, the School of the Americas readily welcomes both its proponents and opponents to visit the school to gain a better understanding of the type of programs being taught at the school.

While, this Member cannot guarantee that no graduate of the SOA will ever abuse human rights or undermine civilian government. What this Member can guarantee is that every effort will continue to be made to fully indoctrinate the students on respect for human rights and democracy at the U.S. Army School of the Americas. The training at this school undoubtedly does far, far more good to encourage appropriate human rights practices than any possible harm that could come from even a perversion of such an educational program some student might practice. This Member feels that it is really time for the congressional and religious opponents of the SOA to abandon this misguided attack on the SOA that misleads so many well-intentioned Americans who write their Senators and Congressmen.

IN HONOR OF OSCAR VIDAL BENITEZ

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 10, 1998

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Oscar Vidal Benitez, a true Cuban American hero and outstanding International Lions Club member.

In 1950, Mr. Benitez joined the Lion's Club in Bayamo, Cuba. Once in the club he set out to be a driving force in Lionism. By 1958 he was President of the local club and eventually he became Governor of an entire region of clubs in Cuba. He became well known for his work for the blind by becoming Director of the Rehabilitation for the Blind Program.

Like so many Cubans, he was forced to flee his homeland and settled in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. Once in America, while attempting to adjust to his new country, he began his work for the Lion's Club almost immediately. In 1963 he founded and became President of the New York Lion's Club of Cubans in Exile. Mr. Benitez fought to get the club recognized by the International Lions Club and eventually the club branched out to form many active Lions Clubs in the metropolitan area.

Next, Oscar Vidal Benitez moved to Miami where he was founded and President of the

Miami Buena Vista Lions Club. In 1971, this club was recognized internationally for gaining one of the largest increases in membership in the world.

In total, Mr. Benitez is responsible for the founding of 15 Lions clubs in the United States and since joining the Lions in 1950, he has never missed a meeting. Mr. Benitez has been internationally recognized for his contributions to Lionism. He has received many President's and Governor's medals of appreciation, he was inducted by the International Board of Directors as a Life Member of Lions International and he has been honored as a Member of the World Humanitarian Fraternity Melvin Jones Fellowship on three separate occasions. Mr. Benitez has done an incredible job of spreading Lionism by starting new clubs, attracting new members and raising money for charity, but his most lasting contributions on behalf of the Lions Club may be his work with the blind.

Mr. Benitez is a life member of the Florida Lions Eye Bank Century Club and the Conklin Center for the Blind and he has received a Presidential Honor for his work with the Lions Home for the Blind, Inc. He is also the founder of the Home for the Blind Foundation which is now funded by Dade County.

On Wednesday, June 10, the West New York Lions Club will honor Oscar Vidal Benitez for his incredible contributions to Lionism and to the community. The West New York Lions Club is the largest in New Jersey and it traces its roots to the New York Lion's Club of Cubans in Exile which Mr. Benitez founded when he first came to the United States.

In closing I would like to thank Mr. Oscar Vidal Benitez for his outstanding work on behalf of the Lions Club. His work across two countries and three states will never be forgotten.

RECOGNIZING THE MORRIS ARCHITECTS

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 10, 1998

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I, Congresswoman JACKSON-LEE, submit the following document concerning the Congressional Recognition of Morris Architects.

CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION OF MORRIS ARCHITECTS

Whereas, Morris Architects was founded in 1938, S.I. Morris and Talbot Wilson sixty years ago, and;

Whereas, throughout the last sixty years, Morris Architects has served the city of Houston and the great state of Texas in fields of entertainment, government, education and health care architectural work and;

Whereas, Morris Architects have always been on the cutting edge of providing monumental landmarks and economic development throughout the United States and;

Whereas, the Alpha Kappa Omega Chapter has always maintained the highest level of excellence, evidenced by the more than sixty awards won by Morris Architects in the last twenty years, to establish a higher standard of life for the residents of Houston and the United States.

Now therefore, be it resolved that Morris Architects, a firm that has prospered